

Good Morning

by Sheryl Nantus

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Good Morning

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Good Morningby Sheryl Martin

The diner clock read 5:15 a.m., like it always did when he walked in. The waitress smiled, pouring the regular cup of coffee and placing it in front of him.

“The usual?”

His hazel eyes shot up, suddenly aware of his surroundings. “Yes, please.” He looked at the paper in his hand, unrolling it across the table.

Taxes going up... another driveby shooting... a civil rights rally... a missing child alert. The fingers gently traced the outlines of the photo. A blonde six year-old who had left school for home yesterday and hadn’t arrived... His head jerked up to the food being placed on the table.

Folding the paper to the sports section he methodically began to spoon the eggs into his mouth, looking over the latest basketball columns... then football. But his eyes kept moving back to the front page, to the picture. The coffee cup was refilled at the same time he finished off the toast, the crumbs falling onto his lap unseen. Quietly the empty plates left the table as he stared again at the front page; rereading the article line for line, even though the first time had been enough for the words to be embedded forever in his mind. Biting his lip to keep the memories at bay he drank more coffee. His hands gently tore the photo out and placed it to one side. A shadow fell across the table. He pushed his cup over for

another refill.

Ã'Not in this century, Mulder.Ã" The gentle voice made his heart skip for a second... She slid into the seat opposite him. A cup of tea appeared in front of her with a muffin; the blackness of his drink refilled. He watched her gracefully slice the muffin up; slathering the butter over the edges and onto her fingers.

Ã'ButterÃ's bad for you, I heard.Ã"

Ã'Once in a while is fine.Ã" She carefully licked her fingers clean. Ã'Call it a vice.Ã" He looked back down at the paper, chewing hard on the inside of his cheek. Taking a deep breath and a mouthful of hot coffee, he tapped the top of the page.

Ã'Hot day again.Ã"

Ã'Surprise me with something new.Ã" Quickly finishing off her muffin, she sipped the tea. Ã'Almost time for work...Ã" Her hand picked up the clipping, feeling the rough edges where he had so carefully torn the newsprint. Ã'You started early.Ã"

Ã'Bad habit.Ã" His eyes met hers. She nodded in reply.

They sat quietly for a minute, until he finally broke away, strong again. Putting the money on the table, he stood up. Ã'LetÃ's go.Ã"

She got to her feet... then tugged at his arm. Ã'Listen...Ã"

The radio droned on. Ã'... six year-old Amanda Donahue was found safe at a friendÃ's home after a frantic search that lasted until the early hours of the morning. She had gone over to visit...Ã" Her smile matched his, warming his heart.

Ã'A happy ending.Ã"

Ã'Yep.Ã" He pushed the door open for her, grinning. Ã'Nice way to start the day, Scully.Ã" The newspaper lay forgotten on the table. Ã'Well, one nice way...Ã" Shaking her head with a soft laugh, she walked by him and out onto the street.

\*\*\*\*\*"You've become a world-class hopeless romantic." "Not hopeless... hopeful. A world-class hopeful romantic."Joan Wilder --  
Romancing The Stone

End  
file.